

METHODS AND APPARATUS FOR ENSURING THE PRIVACY AND SECURITY OF PERSONAL MEDICAL INFORMATION

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method of ensuring the security of data from a medical test includes providing the patient with a medical data card issued by a secure information provider, and having a unique patient identification number (PID), a public key encryption private key (Key 1), and a public key encryption public key (Key 2). The medical data card is used to generate a first test request card that accompanies the test specimen taken from the patient to the secure information provider. The first test request card includes an encrypted identification of the patient and the test; a code identifying the health care provider; the patient identification number (PID); public encryption public key (Key 2); and an identification of the test type. The secure information provider uses the first test request card to generate a second test request card to forward the patient's specimen to a testing laboratory. The second test request card and the specimen are forwarded to the laboratory. The second test request card bears an encryption of the patient's unique identification number, but does not otherwise bear any indicia that would identify the patient. The laboratory performs the prescribed test and generates a first test results card. The results, together with the patient's unique identification number, are provided to the secure information provider that issued the medical data card. The secure information provider provides the encrypted test results onto a second test results card, and forwards the card to the health care provider. The test results on the second test results card are decrypted using the patient's medical data card.